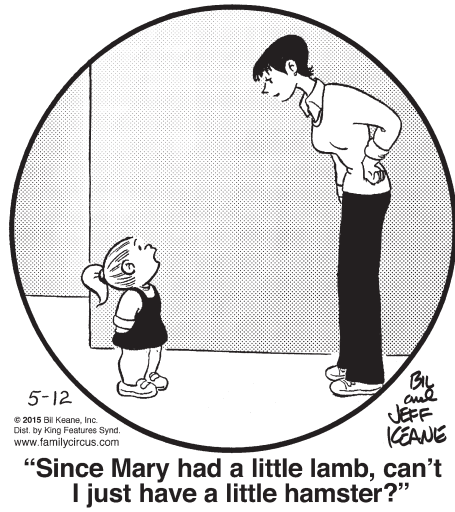
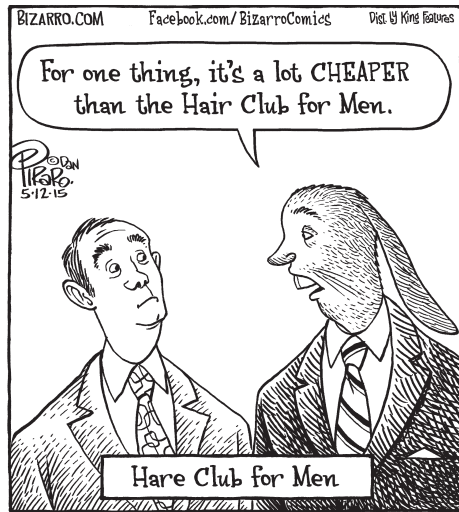


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Son Who's Angry Over Parents' Breakup Must Know The Truth

DEAR ABBY: I am a divorced mother of four. I have been single for three years, since my ex chose an affair over our marriage. I am successful and manage my home and finances.

I am, however, struggling with pressure from my ex to get back together. He had several affairs during the 13 years we were married. The pain and self-loathing were unbearable for me. He hasn't changed. Yet he tells our 14-year-old son, "Jackson," that he still loves me and "wants only to be with me." He also told Jackson that he doesn't know why I have chosen to keep our family broken up.

I moved hundreds of miles to get away from this stress. I have a great job and a lovely home. My son stays mad at me, though. He has chosen to live with his dad, and when he visits he demands explanations for why I am not with them. It breaks my heart. I genuinely do not know what to tell him.

His father has already told him about the affairs, but says I should forgive him. Ironically, I DO forgive him. I want my ex to have a beautiful life — without me. What can a mother say to her son to help him understand that some things just won't mend? — MOVED ON IN ALABAMA

DEAR MOVED ON: You would be doing your son a favor to tell him the truth. As it stands, he thinks that a husband having affairs is nothing serious because that's what his father has told him.

Now it's time to tell Jackson that his father didn't do this just once, he did it repeatedly. Explain that you tried forgiving him, and it only caused you more heartache. Tell your son you love him and you're sorry he's angry at you, but it's clear that his father isn't going to change. And that you would rather remain single than let him touch your body — or your heart — again.

If you do, it may teach Jackson that not all women will accept this kind of treatment and endlessly forgive. If you don't, he may follow

his father's example and turn out just like dear old dad.

DEAR ABBY: I live in my parents' home. They are long-haul truck drivers and come home every eight weeks or so for a few days. I'm disabled and have a caregiver who comes four days a week.

When my parents stop in and the caregiver is here, they expect her to do for them. They keep four dogs on the truck they take with them and leave four dogs at home with me — so that's eight dogs when they are here. I am extremely grateful for this home and I love them very much, but right now I feel like a house/dog-sitter.

My son has invited me to go on vacation with his family. Is it my responsibility to make arrangements for the dogs they have left here? I feel like a prisoner in my own home. — HOUSE-SITTER IN THE SOUTH

DEAR HOUSE-SITTER: Because the dogs have been left in your keeping, the responsibility for assuring their safety and well-being in your parents' absence belongs to you. Ask your parents if they would mind a pet-sitter staying in the house when you vacation with your son, or if they would prefer the dogs be placed in a kennel.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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